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ABSTRACT

This report reviews the development and history of school guidance, which began in 1936, among the various cultural groups in the Republic of South Africa. It explains how political and economic factors influenced the nature and character of school guidance and counseling and how political structures gradually led to the fact that white education and the development of guidance services took precedence over black education. Also examined are the gradual dissatisfaction of blacks with the state of education, the widespread boycotts of school by blacks in the late 1970s, and the introduction of school guidance for blacks in 1981. It is noted that the South African government, which was held mainly responsible for the dilemma in black education prior to 1980, came to the fore that year as the protagonist of a better education system for all people, asking the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to undertake an investigation nationwide of education in the Republic of South Africa in 1980. The report describes how recommendations made in the HSRC 1984 report led to a workable model for school guidance for all population groups in the Republic of South Africa. The directions of school guidance in South Africa in the future are considered. (Author/NB)

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GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH-AFRICA - A FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

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GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH-AFRICA - A FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The author depicts the development of school guidance amongst the various cultural groups in the Republic of South Africa. School guidance experienced five decades of stormy weather because political and economic influences often, and sometimes mercilessly, tried to force it in a certain direction. It had to endure criticism from several sources for many mistakes were also made. Political structures gradually led to the fact that White education and the development of guidance services took precedence over Black education. This state of affairs gradually gave rise to dissatisfaction amongst youthful Blacks. School guidance was only launched in Black schools in 1981 after a spell of widespread boycots of schools by Blacks in 1976. A syllabus for school guidance was accordingly introduced. Where the South African government was held mainly responsible for the dilemma in Black education before 1980, after 1980 it came to the force as the protagonist of a better education system for all the people. In 1980 the Government asked the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to undertake an investigation nationwide of education in the RSA. The 1984 report gave momentum to the effort of recognizing school guidance for all cultural groups in the RSA.

Introduction

Guidance, the stepchild of formal education, as Lindhard (1981 p.31) calls it, is fifty years old this year. When the development of school guidance in South Africa is examined, the history of education claims attention. School guidance experience five decades of stormy weather because political and economic influences often, and sometimes mercilessly, tried to force it in a certain direction. It had to endure criticism from several sources for many mistakes were also made.

It is therefore apposite to leaf through the guidance annals at the memorable half century mark to try and establish what lessons can be learnt from the past and what the future holds for guidance.

The development of guidance in the RSA since 1936

Political and economic factors did in fact influence the nature and character of school guidance. Education and politics can never be divorced from one another and governments are often rightly or wrongly involved with the development of education and guidance in the RSA (Dovey, 1983 p.459).

The policy on education during the nineteen thirties is best summarised in a report by an Interdepartmental Commission on Bantu Education in 1936, viz "the education of the White child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for a subordinate society" (Union of South Africa, 1936). Guidance for Blacks was only given on an informal base, and then only within certain cultural groups. The wellknown abakhweta custom (after an initiation period of three months youts are admitted to the status of grown men) is a good example of this (Dovey, 1983 p.459). Political structures gradually led to the fact that White education and the development of guidance services took precedence over Black education. Black education was then organised and administered mainly by mission societies. The then Malan Government in 1948 assumed responsibility for Black education. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 provided new guide lines for the Blacks. According to Dr. Verwoerd (1954) there was "no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour". This state of affairs gradually gave rise to dissatisfaction amongst youthful Blacks. At this stage the only formal official guidance was an itinerant testing service for Blacks (Watts, 1980 p.3-27).

With the introduction of differentiated education at national level the important role of guidance was stressed by several persons and organisations. Act 39 of 1967, the Act on National Education Policy, stressed the value of guidance in education. Since 1973 all the different education departments in the Republic of South Africa are engaged in the

implementation of a system of differentiated education. The basis on which this system inter alia rested was to supply appropriate guidance to pupils in connection with their educational and career choice in accordance with their personal aptitude and interest and in agreement with the manpower needs of the country (HSRC, 1978). In the Government Gazette of 19 March 1976 the Minister of National Education stipulated that all educational students should receive guidance instruction as from 1977 over and above those students who specialise in school guidance (HSRC, 1970, Kruger, 1980 p.3). As this Act was applicable to White education only, it did not escape criticism. Dovey (1980 p.460) for instance objected to the didactic and moralistic nature of the guidance service.

Because not all interested parties and schools value guidance, the provisions of the Act do not attain their aims in all provinces and schools. For this reason there is still a chronic shortage of guidance teachers and is the guidance period in some schools still known as the "homework period" (Marais, 1982 p.4).

As a result of widespread riots amongst the Black youth during 1976 and the widespread boycots of schools by Blacks in 1981, guidance as a service was launched in Black schools. One teacher per school was appointed to follow a course in guidance. A syllabus was accordingly introduced (Donaldson, 1985 p.7). The object was to provide for the personal, social, educational and career requirements of the Blacks.

Formal career guidance originated during the depression years of the thirties. A National Institute for Professional Guidance was founded and placed under jurisdiction of the Department of National Education (Prinsloo, 1968 p.8; Joubert, 1985 p.9). The seventies were characterised by the socalled "manpower crisis". Increasing White immigration and the the relatively "new" system of two years compulsary military service led to a shortage of personnel for managerial posts. As a result of the policy of labour reservation Blacks were not trained for these select offices. The shortage of trained personnel forced the private sector to establish labour agencies country wide. Shortly after that the Government took a further initiative through an official organisation, Manpower 2000. The main aim of this initiative was to make the public aware of career and training opportunities (Dovey, 1983 p.460).

The White Paper on educational opportunities in the Republic of South Africa (1983) was in all probability the most important document in this connection which was published to date. It was a policy document of the Government which is going to have a far reaching influence on future educational development in the Republic of South Africa. In this document so much prominence was given to guidance that the inherent importance thereof was quite evident. This document seriously appealed to all interested parties to make an effort to ensure its rightful place for the "stepchild" of education in a new educational system (Lindhard, 1981 p.39). It was self evident that guidance teachers were required for this task, teachers who by initial and further training were able to undertake the guidance task efficiently and professionally.

School Guidance - the coming fifty years

Where the Government was held mainly responsible for the dilemma in Black education before 1980, after 1980 it came to the fore as the protagonist of a better education system for all the people.

In 1980 the Government asked the HSRC to undertake an investigation nationwide of education in the RSA. Several working committees were appointed to implement the order. Of these commitees one was the Working Committee: Guidance. This Working Committee asked the Institute for Educational Research to prepare a report on guidance in the RSA. The report was drafted and submitted to the Working Committee as a work document.

Inter alia the hope was expressed that the report would lead to impressing on people dealing with guidance the divergency of ways in which guidance could the presented by the different education departments as well as the shortcomings existing in the presentation of guidance.

Although the Working Committee's recommendations were not necessarily based on the report in question, the recommendations led to a new era for education and guidance in the RSA (HSRC, 1984 p.193).

Important recommendations were advanced by the Working Committee: Guidance in connection with the nature and character of guidance, the organisation and control of school guidance and the training of guidance teachers.

In connection with the nature and character of school guidance it was recommended that the status quo be maintained as far as general school guidance and career guidance were concerned as an umbrella service to schools. Where such a service did not exist, it was to be introduced. It was recommended that these two services be presented as two components of the school guidance service and that both components should carry equal weight in the guidance program (HSRC, 1984 p.194).

With regard to the organisation and control of school guidance services the Working Committee recommended that guidance be divided into three categories, viz. General School Guidance Service (educational programs for all pupils in all schools); a Specialised Career Guidance Service for pupils with particular problems (HSRC, 1984 p.194). To ensure that all pupils received the necessary educational aid and guidance necessary for development to adulthood, it was recommended inter alia that a General school guidance service be introduced at all schools. The recommended organisation of guidance services is shown in Figure 1. It was further recommended that a head for each of the three services be appointed and that the rest of the staff be organised as shown in Figure 1.

As far as the training of guidance staff is concerned, it was recommended that school guidance receive its proper share in the training of all teachers, that is to say in undergraduated Ed.-courses and diploma courses and that a four year diploma course in school guidance be introduced at all training institutions. To ensure that career guidance be properly administered on secondary school level, it was recommended that a four year degree course specialising in career guidance be introduced at all universities in combination with subjects like Psychology, Education and one or more school subjects.

The Working Committee also recommended that an incisive investigation be undertaken into training facilities as an interim measure which may

assist in easing the demand for trained staff, especially Coloureds and Blacks.

An evaluation of the recommendations contained in the report gives rise to certain questions. Are the recommendations sound, are they defensible in principle, are they attainable and practical? Which problems in the present system of school guidance have been solved and what does the future hold for school guidance in the RSA?

People concerned with school guidance will agree with most of the recommendations because they offer a model proposal (something lacking until now) according to which planning, organisation and action can be coordinated in future. In the past school guidance was approached and implemented too provincialistically. The report now creates the opportunity to act in a consolidated manner and on national level. Because the needs of all the inhabitants of the RSA were taken into account, the report is sound in principle. The cultural background of all population groups have been taken into consideration. The passage of time will, however, prove whether the recommendations are attainable and implementable in practice. The biggest single contribution of the report, if an aspect may be singled out, is the workable model for school guidance which it holds out for all polulation groups in the RSA.

If the recommendations are implemented, most of the identified weaknesses of the present system should be eliminated.

Conclusions

The struggle for the survival and development of school guidance during the past half century was not futile. The HSRC investigation of school guidance systems in the RSA is sufficient proof of the slow but sure progress made since 1980. The people of South Africa today have as a result of the experience of the past far more insight into one another's educational needs. It can only be trusted that the report will contribute to the aim of bringing practicing school guidance staff and the personnel of departments of education, teachers training colleges and universities under the impression of the existing weaknesses and how this problem may be solved on national scale.

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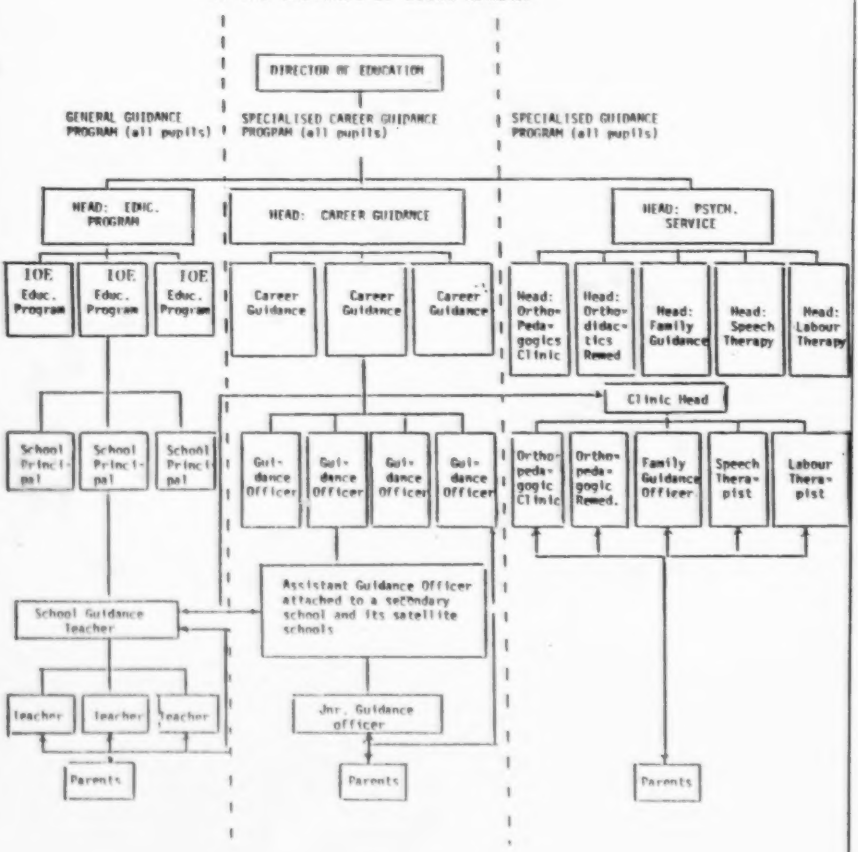
FIGURE 1

SUGGESTED ORGANISATION OF GUIDANCE SERVICES

IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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